

DDR-137-62

26 April 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director

SUBJECT : DD/R Comment on OTR Proposal for
Revising the Language Development
Program

1. With the exception of some specialists in Headquarters elements who constantly deal with foreign language publications, the Language Development Program of the Agency is directed primarily toward the development of proficiency in CS employees. Since this is the case, the following comments are in the nature of observations for whatever relevance they may have to the major problem facing the Agency in this field.

2. Having said this, let me record my belief that voluntary part-time language study will seldom, if ever, develop really usable fluency in foreign languages in those individuals where competence is needed. Our experience with the present program has indicated quite clearly that cash awards for voluntary study often accomplish little more than enriching professional linguists and persons to whom such learning comes easily, many of whom have no intention (or indeed, ability) to use it operationally.

3. If this observation is accurate, it then follows that the only effective way to increase language competence is through directed, duty hours study, usually full-time, to be engaged in by selected individuals. The question then arising is whether simply being on the payroll during such study is sufficient compensation. I would argue that it is, in the case of Modern European languages whose utility is quite broad and the learning of which does not require either a long investment in time or a tentative commitment to a relatively narrow field of endeavor. On the other hand, learning the very difficult and increasingly more important languages of the less developed world (including China) does entail arduous study and an implied commitment to a somewhat narrow specialization. The Russian language is a special

case, being both difficult and of enormous importance. I do not think we would be amiss in sweetening these situations by granting substantial cash awards for the acquisition of usable fluency in such languages. (Cf, the KGB rate.) The number of awards would not be great in any case, and the prospect of such awards could be considered an incentive toward intensive application to the task of learning. For those who do not achieve the desired proficiency, the fact that they had been on the payroll during the process would be considered adequate compensation. It is probably worth repeating that the Agency should not invest the time and money in providing such training unless it is in reasonable anticipation of a specific assignment requiring the use of the language.

3. With this background, the following are my comments on the specific recommendations of the Office of Training:

a. Eliminate awards for directed (i.e., duty hours) training.

Comment: Concur in the case of Modern European languages; non-concur in the case of others.

b. Eliminate awards for FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH and ITALIAN.

Comment: Concur

c. Eliminate awards for maintenance of proficiency.

Comment: Concur in the case of Modern European languages; non-concur in the case of others.

d. Require certification by Heads of Career Services, prior to granting awards, in each case, that persons receiving awards will have reasonable possibilities of using the language for the Agency.

Comment: Concur

e. Pay achievement awards for voluntary training as follows:

PROFICIENCY (type)	SPECIALIZED		COMPREHENSIVE	
PROFICIENCY (level)	INTER	HIGH	INTER	HIGH
	\$200	\$400	\$300	\$600

Comment: Concur (though I doubt there will be many awards).

f. If it is desirable to continue some incentive to maintain proficiency, "use awards" could be established. Use awards would either be calculated on a percentage of base pay, or be a fixed lump sum, paid annually in either case, throughout the duration of an overseas tour, to all persons serving overseas who qualified at designated levels of proficiency in the use of the official foreign language, or a designated important secondary language. Suggested values for use awards are:

PROFICIENCY (type)	SPECIALIZED		COMPREHENSIVE	
PROFICIENCY (level)	HIGH		INTER	HIGH
Percent of Base Pay	3%		3%	5%
Lump Sum	\$400		\$400	\$600

Comment: Concur

SIGNED

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